

## FUERTE DISTRICT.

Resources and Possibilities of the  
Mining District of Sinaloa.—  
Interesting Letter From  
A Mining Man,

VILLA DE CHOIX, Distrito de  
Fuerte, Sinaloa, Mexico.

MR. ALLEN T. BIRD, Editor of THE  
OASIS, Nogales, Arizona.

DEAR SIR:

Complying with your request to furnish you some data relative to the resources of this section of the State of Sinaloa, I will first say that to give a full and exact report it would be necessary to spend weeks, and probably months, traveling over the district upon "that molatis mule," to collect exact information on the points required; but will give you such facts as I have been able to collect in a hurried manner.

We are now in the District of Fuerte, situated in, and constituting, the northern part of this state, and which covers four and one-half million acres of land, of which over one million acres is valley land of rich alluvial soil that can be irrigated by canals taken from the Fuerte river which through the northern part of the district from east to west, and has a flow of from four to five hundred thousands gallons per minute in this the dry season.

All grains and tropical fruits flourish well here. The district contains about 37,000 inhabitants principally engaged in agriculture and commerce.

About 5,000 mules, 2,000 burros, 250 ox carts and 80 wagons of ten mules each are engaged in the freighting business. One day on trail between Choix and Batopilas we counted over 400 mules and burros carrying freight for the Batopilas Mining Company, of Chihuahua.

About 200,000 fanegas of corn, 20,000 fanegas of beans, 10,000 fanegas of peas, 7,500,000 pounds of sugar, 3,000,000 pounds of panocha, 150,000 pounds of cheese, 375,000 pounds of lard and 250,000 gallons of mezcal are produced yearly in the district.

Mr. William V. Lamphar, of Agua Caliente, is one of the largest producers of mezcal in the state, the output of his still being about one-half of the production of the district—and a finer quality could not be found in the Republic. He employs about 120 men and keeps constantly upon the road about 150 mules delivering mezcal in Batopilas, Alamos, Choix, Fuerte, Topolobampo, Agiabampo and other points. He also manufactures from the mezcal fiber rope, saddle blankets, mats, etc.

Along the eastern part of the state run the great Sierra Madre

mountains, where rich mines of gold, silver, copper, iron and lead are found in abundance, and only await the modern miner with capital and enterprise to produce fabulous wealth. Rich gold placer diggings are also found all along the foot-hills between the valleys and mountains. Mr. W. Lamphar informs us that he has seen many nuggets of gold taken from these placers weighing from one to six ounces, and that thirty, fifty, eighty and one hundred dollars from one pan of gravel is not uncommon; and in August of 1898, one miner took one pound of gold from one pan of gravel.

So far we have not tried our hand at placering, so cannot speak from personal experience. We find

the continent, as it is the nearest point where the Pacific Ocean can be reached, and the most direct line for the trade of this coast, Japan, China and all the South Pacific islands with the United States and Europe. And with the advent of this road and the utilization of the water power of the Fuerte, Choix and Chimepas rivers for milling and manufacturing purposes, the State of Sinaloa would advance as fast, if not more rapidly, than any other state in the Republic of Mexico.

Should this letter meet with your approval, you will probably hear from me again.

With best wishes for THE OASIS, I remain  
Yours very truly,  
T. P. LLOYD.

When the title comes they collect \$6 for delivery of the title, in some districts. This custom has not been followed in Ures, but in Magdalena it is adhered to. After this you pay to the government \$10 a year for each pertenencia.

Ten claims make a fair location. Thus two claims wide and five long, making a location 660 feet wide by 1650 feet long. The taxes would be \$200 a year, Mexican, on such a location.

The present law is a great improvement on the old law, which was in vogue before 1892; but there is chance for much improvement in the present law, which if properly brought to the notice of the government, I have no doubt would be acted upon immediately. Something should be done to favor the small mines and those who are working in a small way.

The present law almost prohibits the work on seams and small lodes, unless they are fabulously rich and favorably situated. The small miner is hardly known in Sonora at the present time, while in years gone by his product added no small item to the state's richness.

E. M. ALDERMAN.

S. P. Branch to Naco.

F. D. Pullman, writing to the Los Angeles Mining Review from Bisbee, has the following paragraph,

of railroad news, which would indicate the probable extension of the Southern Pacific to Naco:

"Mr. McFarland, who is the general manager of the Cananea Railroad, is offering to bet that inside of six months the Southern Pacific will be running trains into Naco and I get it pretty straight that, they will start construction at once. Saturday two carloads of Southern Pacific officials went into the Cananeas for a second trip, and that certainly looks as if something were up. The Southern Pacific people are now discovering that they made a grand mistake in letting Phelps-Dodge build from Deming, as that road has already cut the receipts at Benson over many thousand dollars per month. Phelps-Dodge got out a new passengers tariff on April 1st from Deming to Benson, reducing rates a cent a mile, and when they get their passenger equipment it will still further cut into the Southern Pacific."

Upon this page there is presented this week a handsome engraving of the mill at Las Planchas de Plata. With this mill of only ten stamps, the properties has been made to pay handsomely, and with the big 250-stamp mill which the Big Mountain Mining Company, now operating the properties, will shortly erect, the output will make Las Planchas one of the greatest producing regions in Mexico.



## MINING CLAIMS IN SONORA.

Some Information Regarding the Expenses in Locating them.

URES, Sonora, April 24, 1902.

MR. ALLEN T. BIRD, Nogales, Arizona.

DEAR SIR:

An article published in THE OASIS of April 12th, prepared by Briton Davis, and entitled "Investments in Mexico," is very good as far as it goes. But would-be investors in mines want to know what it costs to locate a claim and get a title thereto.

What is commonly called a claim in Mexico is one hundred meters square, and any person can locate as many claims in one location as he pleases. It takes about eight claims to correspond with the claims in the United States in superficial area. The lines of a claim extend down perpendicularly and not as in the states.

Different districts charge different prices for locating a claim. Thus in Ures the cost is a few cents over \$28, while in Magdalena and some other districts you pay \$38. I do not know why there is such a difference. In due time after the location the claim must be surveyed. For this purpose you contract with a surveyor and get it done as cheaply as possible. It usually costs from \$100 to \$300 to get the work done. Then you pay \$10 a pertenencia or claim for title, and \$2 stamps for the deed.

a few of the natives at work all along the river, but they do not seem to exert themselves; for as wages here are only 37½ cents, silver, per day, they seem to think that if they can get fifty cents to one dollar gold in one hour, the day is well spent.

The greatest drawback to proprietors in this section is the scarcity of water in the mountains; and too much water along the rivers for placering and then again the distance to market are items to be considered, as transportation alone to the nearest markets is from \$40 to \$50 per ton. Though that will probably be overcome in the near future, as the Kansas City Mexico & Orient Railroad (Stillwell's line) has been surveyed and located from Topolobampo Bay via Fuerte, Agua Caliente de Baca, and the Setentrion cañon to the summit of the Sierra Madre.

The grading of this road is completed from Topolobampo to Fuerte, a distance of eighty-five miles. We met with Messrs. Jennings and Lasell, who have a grading contract between Fuerte and Agua Caliente. They have about three hundred men at work. They informed us that there were other contractors along the line and that their instructions were to push the work as fast as possible. Mr. Cas is the superintendent of construction for this end of the line.

Topolobampo Bay seems to be a natural outlet for a railroad across